

## **LIVABLE COMMUNITIES E-NEWS**

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### **Livable Communities Task Force releases report on policies to provide gas price relief**

- On June 2, 2011, the Livable Communities Task Force (LCTF) released a report entitled “[Freedom from Oil: How Transportation Choices Can Provide Gas Price Relief.](#)”

The report recommends a suite of legislative proposals and other steps that policymakers, businesses and individuals can take to help consumers deal with high gas prices. LCTF Chairman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), joined by members Lois Capps (D-CA), Jim Moran (D-VA), and Peter Welch (D-VT) spoke at the press conference, emphasizing the importance of giving people choices in how they get around, whether by car, bike, transit, or foot. They also emphasized the health, environmental, and economic benefits of non-automobile based travel. Dan Weiss from the Center for American Progress, Rob Healy of APTA, and Jason Pavluchuk of the Association for Commuter Transportation also gave remarks on the need for short and long-term policies that will offer solutions to transportation oil-dependence.

The report recommends policy solutions that protect communities and families from oil price sticker-shocks, including investments in electric and other non-petroleum fueled vehicles, higher CAFE standards, Pay-As-You-Drive Insurance, federal funding for transit and Safe Routes to Schools programs, and location-efficient mortgages. See the [full report](#) for more details.

### **Task Force supports appropriations for the Partnership for Sustainable Communities**



- Earlier this month, Task Force members weighed in with the Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior and Environment and Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development to support the livable communities activities at HUD, DOT, and EPA in FY12. The livability initiatives are helping communities improve their transportation network, mitigate environmental impact, and encourage sustainable development patterns. The members sent letters to the Subcommittees urging support for President Obama's funding requests for the livability efforts at the three agencies, including HUD's Sustainable Communities Initiative and Choice Neighborhoods, EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities, as well as FHWA's Livable Communities program, and FTA's Livability Demonstration Grant program.

### **Task Force Members' legislation to enhance livability and sustainability**

- On May 11, Representatives Blumenauer, Moran, and Mazie Hirono (D-HI) released the "[Commuter Relief Act of 2011](#)," which promotes equity among transportation commuting benefits in the tax code.. In current law, tax benefits give preference for commuting by car. This revenue-neutral legislation sets a uniform cap on transportation benefits, and allows employers to offer a parking cashout to employees who would prefer not to drive on their commute. The legislation would make it easier for people to commute by bicycle, walking, carpooling, or using public transit, and also enables transportation benefits to be combined for those with multimodal commutes.

- On May 5, 2011 LCTF member Rep. Doris Matsui (D-CA) introduced the "[Safe and Complete Streets Act of 2011](#)" with Rep. Steven LaTourette (R-OH). This bipartisan legislation requires states DOTs and MPOs instate a Complete Streets policy to ensure transportation facilities are safe and accessible for all users. Complete streets provide safe and vital access for commuters of all ages and abilities, on a variety of modes including transit, bicycle, car, and on foot. They accommodate this great diversity of needs and remove barriers to use by children, the elderly, and the disabled. Complete Streets policies save lives and ensure that investments provide a lasting value to the community.

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